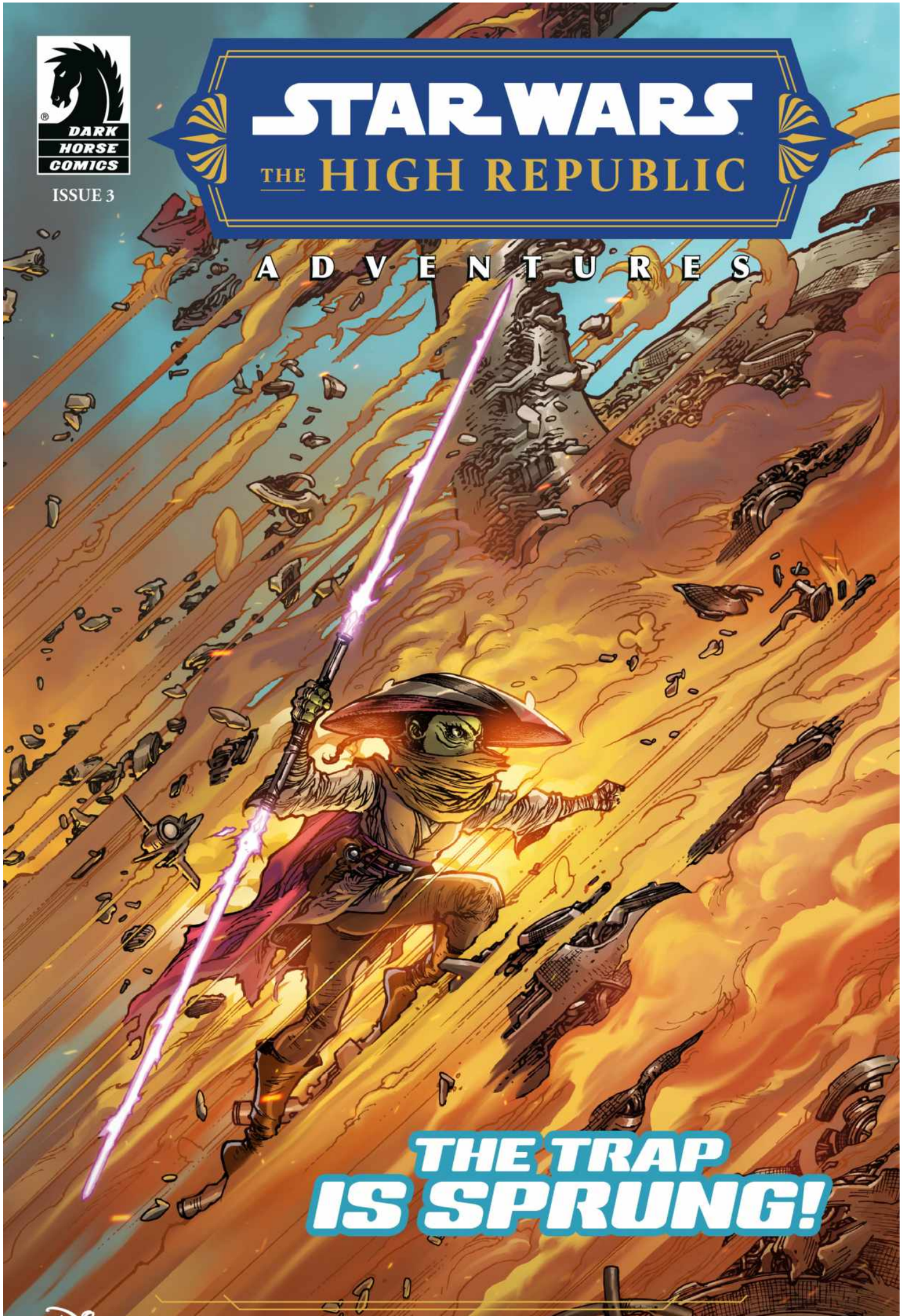
DARK HORSE COMICS
ISSUE 3
STAR WARS
THE HIGH REPUBLIC
ADVENTURES
THE TRAP IS SPRUNG!

STAR WARS™

THE HIGH REPUBLIC

ADVENTURES

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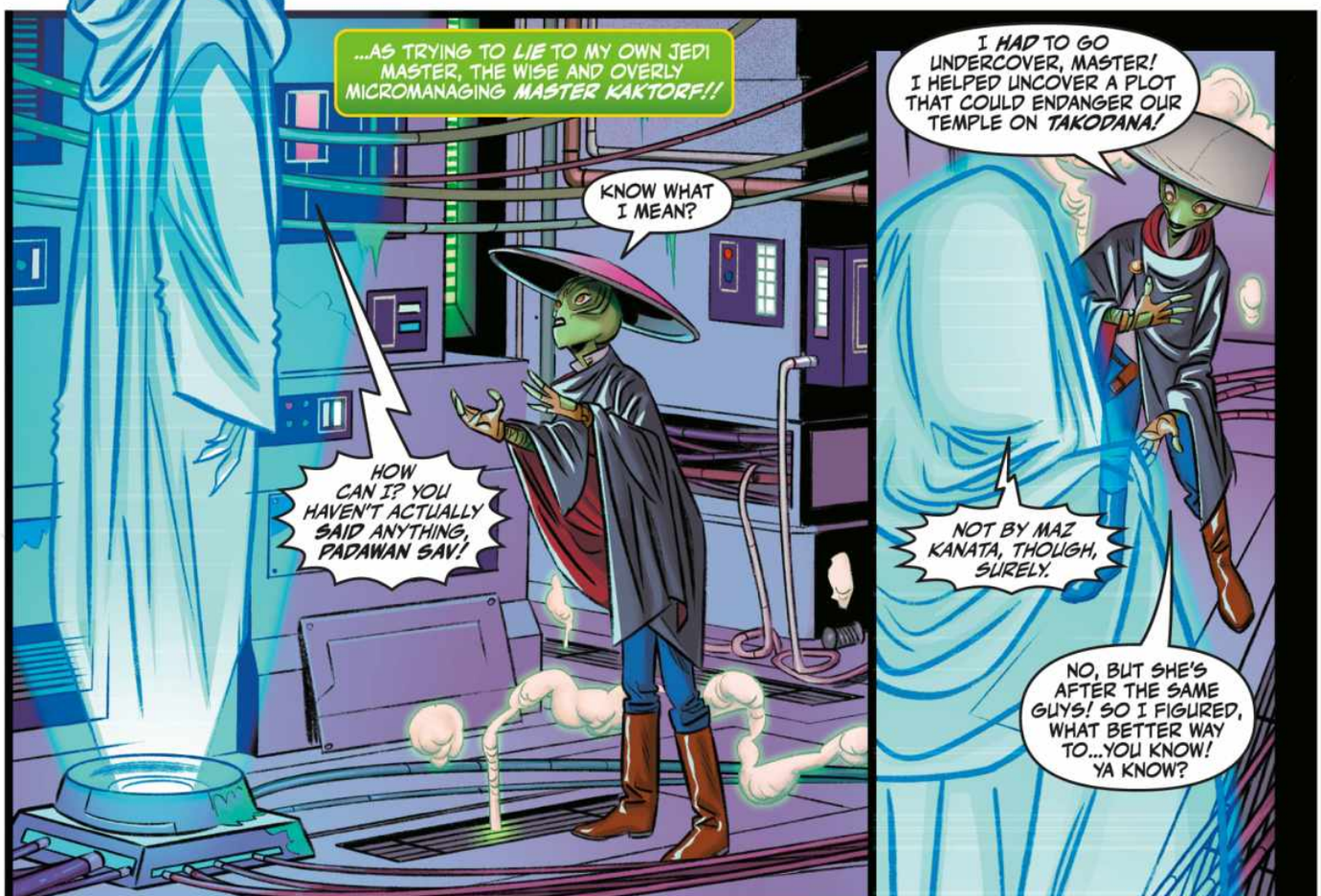
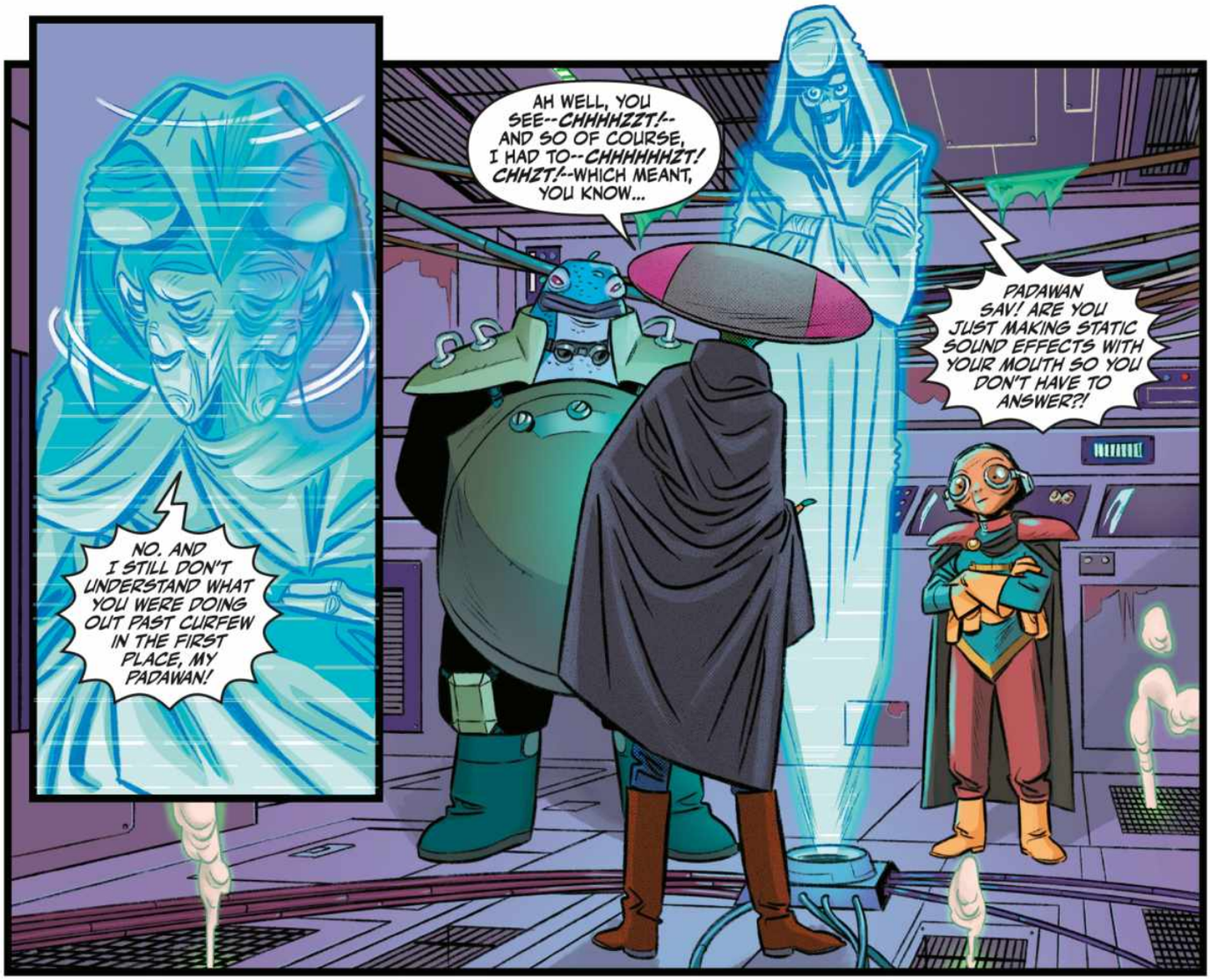
DAY TWO OF BEING UNDERCOVER WITH MAZ KANATA'S PIRATE CREW.
SO, YOU SEE, UM...
ALREADY GOT MYSELF FOUND OUT BY THE LEGENDARY QUEEN HERSELF...
THE GRIM DEVOURER, THE DANK GRAKS' STOLEN PIRATE SHIP.

...AND MANAGED TO START SOME KIND OF SPAT BETWEEN ALAK, ONE OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS SWASHBUCKLERS IN THE GALAXY, AND THE PIRATE HUNTER WHO HE FELL FOR...
THAT! THE THING IS THAT! I...
...AND YET NONE OF THAT IS NEARLY AS BAD...


...AS TRYING TO LIE TO MY OWN JEDI MASTER, THE WISE AND OVERLY MICROMANAGING MASTER KAKTORF!!
KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
HOW CAN I? YOU HAVEN'T ACTUALLY SAID ANYTHING, PADAWAN SAV!
I HAD TO GO UNDERCOVER, MASTER! I HELPED UNCOVER A PLOT THAT COULD ENDANGER OUR TEMPLE ON TAKODANA!
NOT BY MAZ KANATA, THOUGH, SURELY.
NO, BUT SHE'S AFTER THE SAME GUYS! SO I FIGURED, WHAT BETTER WAY TO...YOU KNOW! YA KNOW?


NO. AND I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WERE DOING OUT PAST CURFEW IN THE FIRST PLACE, MY PADAWAN!
AH WELL, YOU SEE--CHHHHZZT!-- AND SO OF COURSE, I HAD TO--CHHHHHHZT! CHHZT!--WHICH MEANT, YOU KNOW...
PADAWAN SAV! ARE YOU JUST MAKING STATIC SOUND EFFECTS WITH YOUR MOUTH SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER?!

CHHZZTT!
WHAT? NO! IT MUST BE A FAULTY COMM BEACON! YOU KNOW THOSE THINGS ARE ALWAYS KAR--CHHZZT!
IT'S TIME YOU CAME BA--

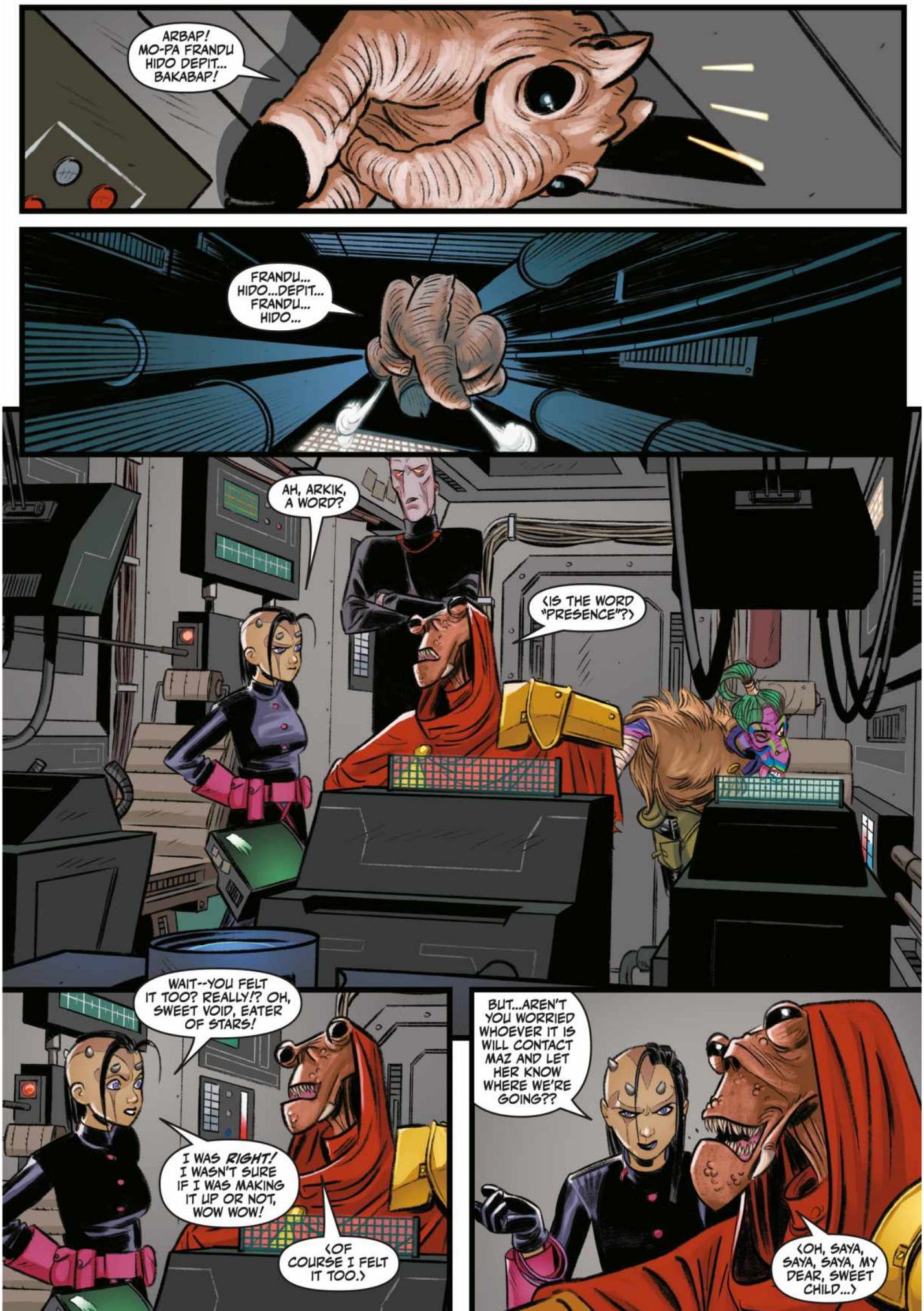
CHHHHHZT! CHHZT!
HUH?!
--THIS INSTA--
DNK DNK DNK

PADAWA--
CHHZZZT!
--HEAR ME?? HELLO?! FORCE-FORSAKEN BEACONS! HOW IS ANYONE--
CHHHHZZT!
DNK DNK DNK
AH, BETTER GO! I'LL CHECK IN WHEN WE GET SOMEWHERE WITH BETTER COMMS!! MAY THE FORCE FORCE BE THE FORCE! BYE!
BLIP
WHEW. THANKS FOR THE HELP. I GOTTA GET BETTER AT LYING OR THIS WILL NEVER WORK OUT.
I'LL SAY.
ON THE PLUS SIDE, WELL... NO, NEVER MIND, THAT WAS JUST TERRIBLE.
CITATION!!
OH, REALLY, RADO? ARE YOU SERIOUS, MATE?
INTENTIONALLY PARTICIPATING IN THE WILLFUL DECEPTION OF AN HONORED MEMBER OF THE JEDI ORDER, IN VIOLATION OF CODE 89710-B...
"HONORED" MIGHT BE A LITTLE BIT OF A STRETCH...
WELL, WE WRAPPED UP JUST IN TIME FOR ALAK TO HAVE HIS NIGHTLY HOLO-CHAT WITH RAF. GATHER ROUND, EVERYBODY! HOPEFULLY IT'S NOT TOO MESSY...
...AND URTHER, THUS BELAYETH THE COND DERIVATIVE ARLAY OF THE ENOUNCEMENT HEREIN WHICH, REAFTER, SHALL BE REFERRED TO...
EEP!
OH, IT'S THE EVIL LITTLE JEDI GIRL.
QUIET, TEE-AYTEE.

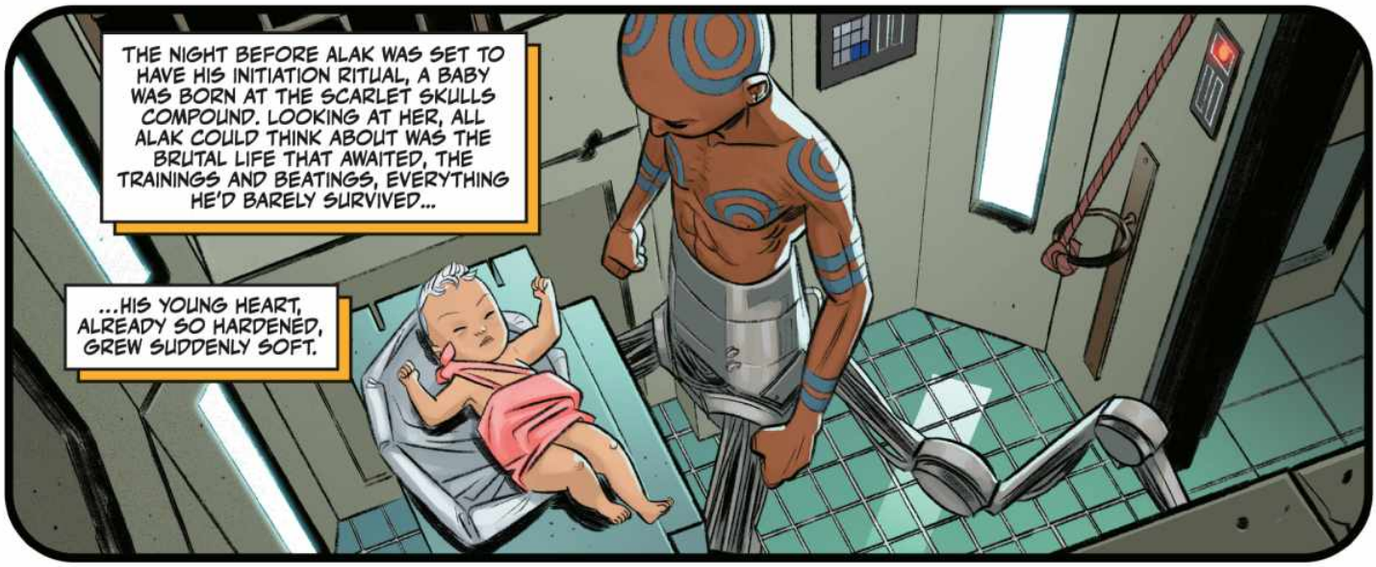
BATA KO-BATA
BATA KO-BATA
BATA KO--
THE VENOMED SCABBARD,
MAZ KANATA'S STOLEN PIRATE SHIP.

EXACTLY MY POINT, YOU SCRAGGLE LARK!
AOOP?

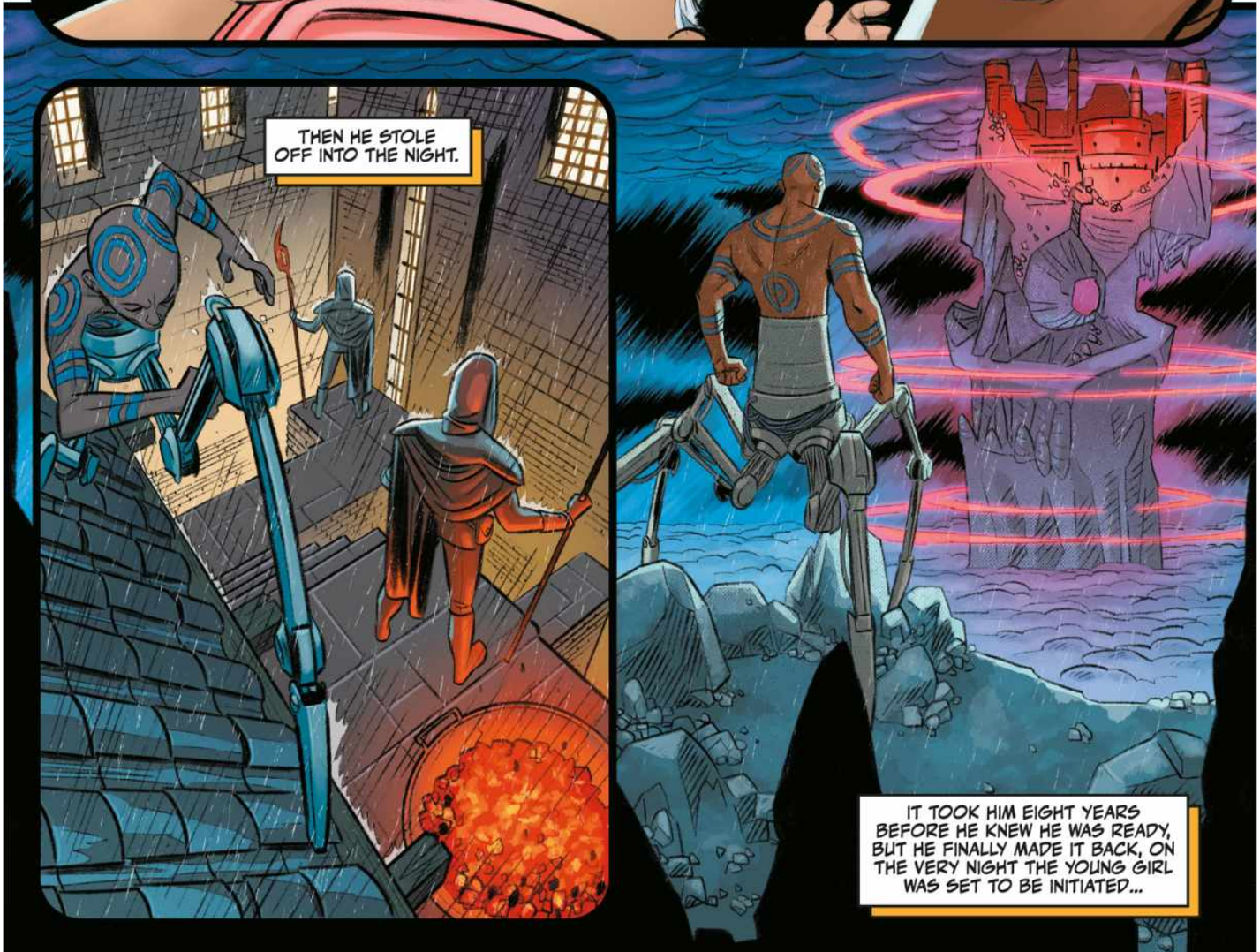
‹WE'LL DEAL WITH MAZ LATER. RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE TO PICK UP SOME VERY SPECIAL STARFIGHTERS TO COMPLETE OUR END OF THE DEAL.›
SEE WE GO GET SHIP SHIPS?? AHA! SHIP SHIP!! VROOOOOOOM DRILL DRILL AHAHAHAHA
‹SET A COURSE FOR FRANDER'S HIDDEN DEPOT! NOW!›*
*TRANSLATED FROM GEONOSIAN.


ARBAP! MO-PA FRANDU HIDO DEPIT... BAKABAP!
FRANDU... HIDO...DEPIT... FRANDU... HIDO...
AH, ARKIK, A WORD?
<IS THE WORD "PRESENCE"?>
WAIT--YOU FELT IT TOO? REALLY!? OH, SWEET VOID, EATER OF STARS!
I WAS *RIGHT!* I WASN'T SURE IF I WAS MAKING IT UP OR NOT, WOW WOW!
<OF COURSE I FELT IT TOO.>
BUT...AREN'T YOU WORRIED WHOEVER IT IS WILL CONTACT MAZ AND LET HER KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING??
<OH, SAYA, SAYA, SAYA, MY DEAR, SWEET CHILD...>
<I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT MAZ.>
<I'M WORRIED ABOUT WHAT'S COMING FOR MAZ.>
<AND FOR US.>
<AND FOR EVERYONE.>
<AND FOR EVERYTHING.>
<AND I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU.>
<YOU'RE SO SENSITIVE.>
<YOU'RE SO SMART.>
<YOU'RE SO...>
<YOU.>
<YOU'RE SO YOU.>
<I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU BEING YOU.>
<AND I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU BEING YOU WITH ME.>
<I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU BEING YOU WITH ME AND MAZ.>
<I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU BEING YOU WITH ME AND MAZ AND EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING.>
<I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU BEING YOU WITH ME AND MAZ AND EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING AND I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU.>
<I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU.>
<I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU.>

"...I'M COUNTING ON IT!"
WHEW! FEELS GOOD TO FINALLY GET THAT STUFFY BODY ARMOR OFF! I CAN BREATHE AGAIN!
UM...HOW COME THE WHOLE CREW SITS AROUND WATCHING THIS SUPER PERSONAL CONVERSATION??
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SCARLET SKULLS?
THE EVIL CULT OF MURDER KIDS WHO TATTOO THEIR FACES WITH SCARLET SKULLS AND CHOP OUT THEIR OWN TONGUES SO THEY CAN MURDER PEOPLE?! MURDER!
THAT'S THEM, YEAH.
NOT SINCE I WAS LITTLE, ACTUALLY. GUESS THEY HAVEN'T BEEN ACTIVE RECENTLY.
WAIT! IS ALAK--?! BUT...
ALAK'S PARENTS WERE ONE OF THE FIVE RULING SCARLET SKULL FAMILIES.
...HE DOESN'T HAVE THE FACE TATT! AND HE HAS A TONGUE!


THE NIGHT BEFORE ALAK WAS SET TO HAVE HIS INITIATION RITUAL, A BABY WAS BORN AT THE SCARLET SKULLS COMPOUND. LOOKING AT HER, ALL ALAK COULD THINK ABOUT WAS THE BRUTAL LIFE THAT AWAITED, THE TRAININGS AND BEATINGS, EVERYTHING HE'D BARELY SURVIVED...
...HIS YOUNG HEART, ALREADY SO HARDENED, GREW SUDDENLY SOFT.

HE WHISPERED A TINY PROMISE TO HER.
THAT WHATEVER IT TOOK, HE'D FIGURE OUT A WAY TO SAVE HER FROM HIS OWN FAMILY BEFORE THEY TURNED HER INTO ANOTHER KILLER.


THEN HE STOLE OFF INTO THE NIGHT.
IT TOOK HIM EIGHT YEARS BEFORE HE KNEW HE WAS READY, BUT HE FINALLY MADE IT BACK, ON THE VERY NIGHT THE YOUNG GIRL WAS SET TO BE INITIATED...

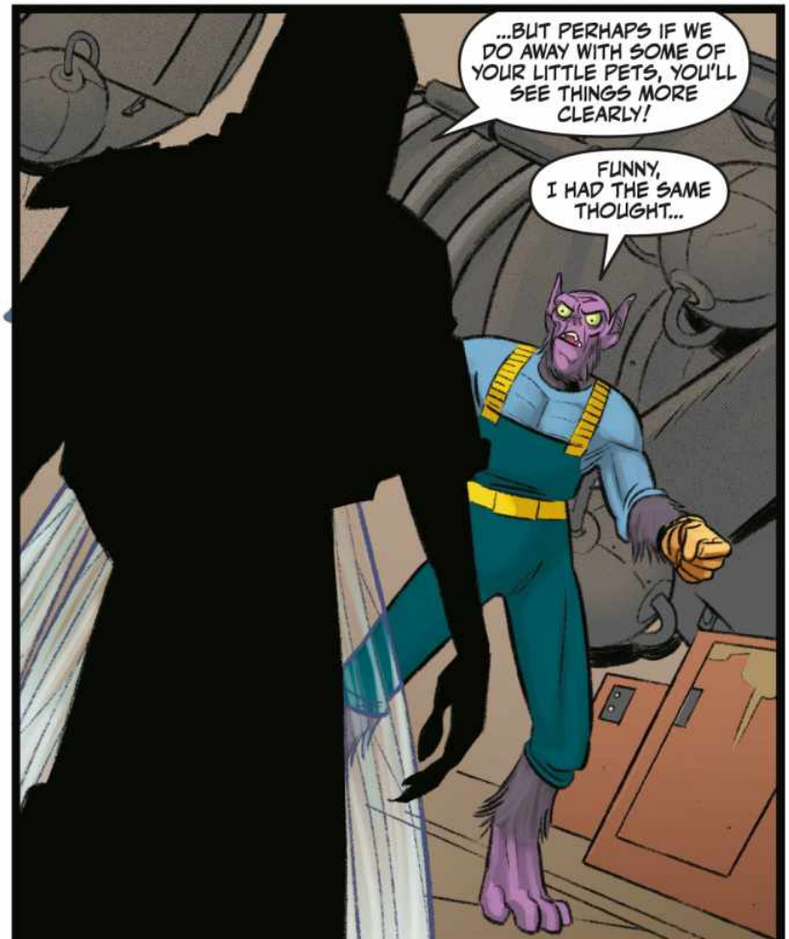
DI-DID HE SAVE HER??
OF COURSE. SHE'S RIGHT THERE.
QUIET SHAN WAS THE BABY! I KNEW IT! WHOA!
BUT WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE REST OF THE SCARLET SKULLS??
WELL, THERE'S A REASON YOU HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THEM SINCE YOU WERE A KID, AND THAT NIGHT IS THE REASON.
STARS!! THAT'S AMAZING!! WHAAAAT!!
POINT IS: WE TRUST ALAK COMPLETELY. BUT WE ALSO KNOW HOW FEELINGS CAN CLOUD THINGS. SO WE ALL AGREED--IF HE'S GOING TO BE CHATTING WITH THIS PIRATE HUNTER EVERY NIGHT, WE'LL KEEP AN EYE ON HIM. MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T ACCIDENTALLY GIVE UP ANY SECRETS.
WOW. I KINDA LOVE IT.
IT'S AWKWARD, BUT IT WORKS.
MAZ! WE JUST GOT A MESSAGE FROM ABADOO! THEY'RE HEADING TO FRANDER'S!
VERY GOOD. EVERYONE-- YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. LET'S GO STEAL OUR SHIP BACK!

FRANDER'S HIDDEN DEPOT.
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU MEAN BY *NO, FRANDER?!*
IS VERY CLEAR. WHAT IS NOT CLEAR? NEGATIVE. NOT HAPPENING. NONESUCH.
THE *GRAF* CLAN, WHO YOU WORK WITH, OKAYED THE DEAL. YOU WORK FOR THE GRAFS.
EH, I HEARD ABOUT WHAT YOU DID BACK ON *UTAPAU*. GOT NO LOVE FOR THE REPUBLIC, CERTAINLY NOT THE JEDI, BUT I DON'T WORK WITH THOSE WHO USE THE FORCE LIKE THIS, EH?
ANYWAY, THEY'RE TRYING TO BAN MY BEAUTIFUL EVISCERATORS, YOU KNOW? "FORCE-USERS HAVE ENOUGH POWER ALREADY," THEY SAY! "WHY GIVE THEM A SHIP ONLY THEY CAN USE?"
I DID WHAT WAS ASKED OF ME, NOW THEY WANT TO MAKE IT OBSOLETE. BAH! ALL I NEED IS YOU LOSERS OUT THERE COMMITTING MORE ATROCITY WITH IT. BANNED FOR SURE!
OH, FRANDER. WHEN YOU'RE GASPING FOR BREATH AND CHARRED TO A CRISP, JUST REMEMBER I TRIED TO PAY FOR THESE SHIPS LIKE AN HONEST BUSINESSMAN.
BUT YOU FORCED MY HAND!!

AND THAT SHOULD DO IT!
NOT BAD PILOTING, KID!
NO SIGN WE WERE PICKED UP ON ANY SCANNERS. YOUR SMOOTH MANEUVERS THROUGH THAT SCRAP CANYON KEPT US WELL CONCEALED. GOOD WORK!
VENOMED SCABBARD, HERE WE COME! HOPE ABADOO'S OKAY.
FRANDER'S MAIN YARD IS JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT SCRAP PILE.
YOU GUYS GO AHEAD. I WANT TO SEE WHAT ELSE I CAN FIND OUT FROM THIS THING'S COMPUTERS.
ALRIGHT, EVERYONE, STAY SALTY FRESH!
KEEP YOUR WEAPONS HOT AND YOUR HEADS COOOOOL, MATES!

RRRRR... LOOKS BAD BAD. MIGHT HAVE TO SNIP SNIP.

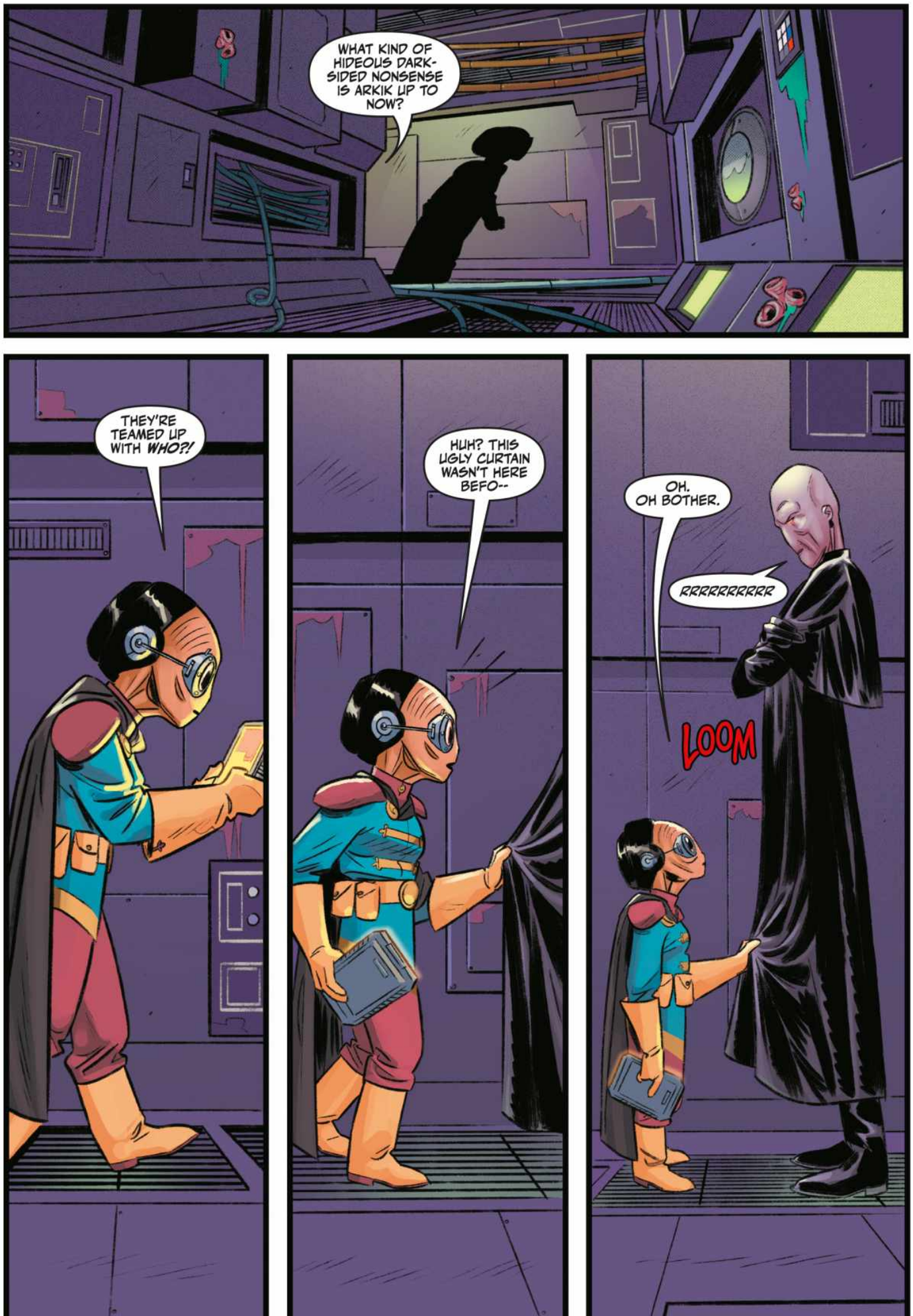
THEY'RE CHOKING THOSE BONBRAKS WITH THE FORCE!
THE GRAFS WON'T BE PLEASED WITH THIS...


...BUT PERHAPS IF WE DO AWAY WITH SOME OF YOUR LITTLE PETS, YOU'LL SEE THINGS MORE CLEARLY!
FUNNY, I HAD THE SAME THOUGHT...

URK...!
NOW RELEASE MY BONBRAKS!

WE GO IN ON MY MARK!
"THREE... "
HMM.
DO WHATEVER YOU MUST, AND SO WILL I, FRANDER!
"...TWO..."
UH?!

STOP THIS INSTANT, EVERYONE!!
IS THAT SAV?!
WHO THE VOID ARE YOU?!
AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY DEPOT, EH??
BAZRIP RATHT, I'M CALLED. THE GRAF CLAN SENT ME TO OVERSEE THIS DEAL, THOUGH I NORMALLY PROVIDE BOUNTY HUNTING SERVICES FOR THEM.
HOW COME I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE, CHILD?
AH, THE HIGHER THE QUALITY, THE HIGHER THE PRICE TAG, AS YOU WELL KNOW, DEAR FRANDER.
I HAVE SPOTTED OUR SHIP, MASTER ARKIK. APPEARS TO BE UNGUARDED.
AHHH...
ALL RIGHT, YOUNG MR. RATHT-- IF THAT IS YOUR NAME-- WE'LL NEED TO CONFIRM YOUR EXISTENCE WITH THE GRAFS, I'M AFRAID. SAYA, LAVALOX, LET'S GO!


WHAT KIND OF HIDEOUS DARK-SIDED NONSENSE IS ARKIK UP TO NOW?
THEY'RE TEAMED UP WITH WHO?!
HUH? THIS UGLY CURTAIN WASN'T HERE BEFO--
OH. OH BOTHER.
RRRRRRRRRR
LOOM

YOU'RE NOT WHO YOU SAY YOU ARE, CHILD...
I...
BUT YOU SAVED MY BONBRAKS AND DEFUSED A NASTY SITUATION, SO YOU HAVE MY THANKS.
WELL, YOU KNOW, JUST--
NOW HOW 'BOUT YOU TELL ME *EXACTLY* WHAT IT IS YOU'RE--
HUH?!
OH NO!

ZHHOMMMM
FZZHH
THOM
THOM
THOM

STARS! YOU LOVE TROUBLE, SAV!
TROUBLE LOVES ME! NOT MY FAULT!
ZOM
ZOM
ZOM
FA-FOM
SEE?! FOUND ME! I DIDN'T ASK TO GET SHOT AT!
COME ON! THE SCABBARD IS JUST OVER THERE!
HMM.
WAIT! HAVE WE HEARD FROM MAZ??
NO! SHE MUST BE...

...STILL ON THE SHIP!
EVERYONE TO THE SCABBARD! QUICKLY!
THEY'VE GOT MAZ!!

GO! GO! GO!
WAIT! WHERE'S THE KID?!
SAV? I THOUGHT SHE WAS WITH YOU!
HOW DO WE KEEP LOSING PEOPLE?!
'CUZ WE GOT TOO MANY PEOPLE!
SNIP SNIP!
SAV! SAV! COME IN!
THIS IS SAV! I'M OKAY!
WELL THEN WHAT THE BLAZING BOLT BOXES ARE YOU DOING?!
THE ONE THING ONLY I CAN DO TO SAVE MAZ!

I'M GONNA JOIN THE DANK GRAKS!!

In our next installment . . .